

### Abstract

A system and method for implementing a control channel in a packet switched communications network. In a computer network, such as a local area network (LAN) it is known to utilize the Ethernet for distributing communications between stations. The Ethernet employs a standard frame format that includes header frames and, in particular a preamble frame which may be used to provide synchronization information between switching devices or nodes. The preamble frame is not required in a Gigabit Ethernet implementation and the present invention employs a portion of the preamble frame to implement a control channel between switching devices.